

Our Immoral Economic Order:

I. CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY

II. THE AMERICAN LIBERTY LEAGUE

Two Addresses Delivered by

IGNATIUS W. COX, S.J.



Church Unity

Corporate Reunion or Individual Conversion?

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Constitutional Liberty and Our Immoral Economic Order

IGNATIUS W. COX, S.J.

*An address delivered over the Paulist Radio Station WLWL,
New York, January 31, 1936.*

ONE of the most startling passages of the encyclical on "The Reconstruction of the Social Order," is that in which Pius XI reviews the changes in the capitalistic order since the days of Leo XIII forty years before. Says the reigning Holy Father: "It is patent that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination are concentrated in the hands of a few, and that those are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds who administer them at their good pleasure." Continuing the subject further, Pius XI asserts: "Free competition is dead; economic dictatorship has taken its place. Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain . . . The State . . . has become a slave, bound over to the service of human passion and greed." Then the Holy Father sums up the situation in a sentence of profound significance when he says: "As regards the relations of peoples among themselves, a double stream has issued from this one fountain-head; on the one hand, economic nationalism or even economic imperialism; on the other hand a not less noxious and detestable international imperialism in financial affairs, which holds that where a man's fortune is, there is his country."

I have thus quoted extensively from Pius XI so that no man may accuse me of being a demagogue or of inciting the poor against the rich. But let me state most emphatically there are more than two flags contending for pride of place over our national capitol. It is not merely a question of the red flag of the internationale, or of the stars and stripes. There is a third flag, a black flag, the pirate flag of

economic domination which would contend with the other two or rather wrap itself up in folds of liberty, the more surely, however unconsciously, to impose upon the masses, in the words of Leo XIII: "A yoke little better than slavery itself"; or in the words of Pius XI: "To divert business and economic activity entirely to its own arbitrary will and advantage, without any regard to the *human dignity* of the workers, the social character of economic life, social justice and the common good."

Let no one of my audience misunderstand me. Last Saturday, millions of Americans listened to ex-Governor Smith in one of the great and sincere pieces of American eloquence. Governor Smith is a great American and a great patriot. His words deserve the respectful attention of every American and every patriot. Let no one accuse him of insincerity; his words ring too true for that. Let no one say that he is not a friend of the poor. His record of social legislation as four times governor of New York; his whole life is the answer to that. With the merely political aspects of this great American's speech, I have no concern. But his remarks on the Constitution are more than political. Ex-Governor Smith voiced the fears of millions when he denounced any attempt to nullify our Constitution by indirection. The philosophy behind such attempts, I may treat in a future broadcast.

My main concern this evening is with the remarks of Governor Smith on Communism. That is certainly a moral issue over and above a political issue and it is certainly an over-simplification of the issue to picture the impending struggle in this country as lying solely and exclusively between constitutional liberty and the slavery of Communism. And if we Americans, Christians, and all God-fearing folk, beguile ourselves with the delusion that the contest is merely between the stars and stripes and the red flag of Communism, we are liable to find at the end of the war that we have not made America safe for democracy and the Constitution, but safe only for plutocracy and that economic domination of the few about which I spoke in the very beginning of this broadcast. As before the Civil War, Lincoln said this nation cannot endure half slave and half free, so it is equally true that political freedom cannot long endure in this country alongside of economic servitude. The guarantee of

political freedom for the masses, is the economic freedom of the masses, and without that their political freedom is a mockery, a delusion and a snare.

Not all regimentation is communistic. It depends on the principles and philosophy back of the regimentation. Liberty unregulated, unregimented by law is not liberty; it is license. My point is, that too long have economic and financial interests been unregimented by law; have pushed their liberty to the point of license. Speaking of this economic supremacy Pius XI says: "This is a headstrong and vehement power which needs to be curbed strongly and ruled with prudence. It cannot be curbed and governed by itself. More lofty and noble principles must therefore be sought in order to control this supremacy sternly and uncompromisingly; namely, social justice and social charity. To that end all the institutions of public and social life must be imbued with the spirit of justice; and this justice above all must be truly operative, must build up a juridical and social order able to pervade all economic activity." Now if this does not mean some regimentation of economic, business and financial life, words have lost their true meaning. If regimentation of the economic and financial life of a country, guiding and restraining and curbing it by a juridical system, by constitution and by law, if such regimentation is socialistic or communistic, then one would have to accuse the Holy Father himself of being a Socialist or a Communist.

Man in himself and in his complex relationships is regimented by nature, by the natural law of God, and by the law of grace. There is the regimentation of the human person, in which the multiplicity and diversity of parts and functions are reduced to harmony and unity, subject to the rule of reason. There is the regimentation of man in the natural society of the family, instituted for the procreation and education of children. The family is a moral whole, a moral unity, a moral body reduced to order under the authority of the father. The individuals of the family as well as the family itself as an organic whole, are the possessors of rights and duties. The fundamental rights of individuals and the family are summed up in the Declaration of Independence, as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is for the protection of these rights that human governments

are formed and clothed with authority by God Himself, as the author of the natural society of the State. The end and purpose of all human government is the peace and prosperity of all its citizens.

Peace consists in defense and protection of the rights of the citizens, economic and otherwise, the defense of the citizens from the exploitation by the stronger or the more unscrupulous. Prosperity consists in the abundance of means ready at hand by the use of which each individual can pursue life, liberty and happiness; that is, develop himself, physically, intellectually and morally, as he has a solemn obligation to do, imposed by the Natural Law of God. If the citizen fails to do this, when the State provides prosperity, then the failure to do so is his, not the State's. But if the citizen fails, because the State fails in its solemn obligation to provide prosperity, then the failure is the State's, not his, and such a State cannot be long sanctioned by moral law.

Now who would say that the State in this country has provided that common good of prosperity to which the citizens have a right and with regard to which the State has a solemn obligation from Almighty God. And if the State fails to provide that prosperity for the whole people, because it is forbidden by the organic law and Constitution, who would deny that there is an obligation to change that Constitution in the interests of the common good of peace and prosperity, in the interests of human rights as preferential to misinterpreted property rights.

So far I have spoken of regimentation as coming from nature and the Natural Law. There is a still greater and higher regimentation of man that comes from the Law of Grace. It is that organization of men through Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharistic with Jesus Christ as their head, into a living, organized moral body, which we have called the Mystical Body of Christ. By this living organism men become the members of Jesus Christ, more closely united among themselves than men can ever be in the social organism or in the body politic. It is this truth to which Pius XI calls attention, when he says: "Then only will it be possible to unite all in harmonious striving for the common good, when all sections of society have the intimate conviction that they are members of a single family and children of the

same heavenly Father, and further that they are 'one body in Christ, and everyone members of one another,' so that 'if one member suffers anything, all members suffer with it.'

Opposed to this sound and true regimentation of human life by the law of nature and the law of grace, there has taken place another regimentation imposed by the vicious will of man, by the desire of greed and economic domination. These two are the evil spirits of modern capitalism, which came into being with the beginning of the industrial era. Two things were required for the growth of this modern capitalism, money in large quantities, and a large indigent city population—money and a city proletariat. I have not time now to treat the whole pernicious process, including the slave trade, and the making of economic slaves of the city proletariat. Under the old domestic system, or guild system, conditions were vastly different. A master could not but intimately know his workmen and apprentices. For each of these he held himself accountable in every Christian way, so long as the ancient Faith still flourished and influenced men's minds and conduct.

In the industrial system a hired foreman came to stand between the worker and the master who employed him. Then came the era of ruthless competition. The corporation took the place of the individual factory owner. These corporations of which Pius XI says: "The worst injustices and frauds take place beneath the common name of a corporative firm. Boards of directors proceed in their unscrupulous methods even to the violation of their trust in regard to those whose savings they administer."

In May, 1891, Leo XIII summed up the first period of the industrial system in the words: "The ancient workmen's guilds were destroyed in the last century and no other organization took their place. Public institutions and laws have repudiated the ancient religion. Hence by degrees it has come to pass that workingmen have been given over, isolated and defenseless, to the callousness of employers, and the greed of unrestrained competition."

Forty years and more have passed since Leo XIII wrote those words in his great encyclical, *Magna Charta* of liberty, both for the capitalist and for the worker. Things have changed since then. And Pius XI sums up those changes. It was W. T. Stead, a great journalist, who de-

clared: "There is no post of vantage in the world's broad field of battle, comparable to that of the Vatican."

Here is the complete picture, drawn in the words of Pius XI, of the changed economic condition in the last forty years: "But it is the capitalist economic régime that, with the world-wide diffusion of industry, has penetrated everywhere, particularly since the publication of Leo XIII's encyclical. It has invaded and pervaded the economic and social sphere even of those who live outside its ambit, influencing them, and, as it were, intimately affecting them by its advantages, inconveniences and vices. When we turn our attention, therefore, to the changes which this capitalistic economic order had undergone since the days of Leo XIII, we have regard to the interests, not of those only who live in countries where capital and industry prevail, but of the whole human race.

"In the first place, then it is patent that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic dominations are concentrated in the hands of a few, and that those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds who administer them at their good pleasure. This power becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by those who, because they hold and control money, are able also to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the lifeblood to the entire economic body, and grasping as it were in their hands the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will. This accumulation of power, the characteristic note of the modern economic order, is a natural result of limitless free competition, which permits the survival of those only who are the strongest, which often means those who fight most relentlessly, who pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."

And then the Holy Father declares: "This concentration of power has led to a threefold struggle for domination. First, there is the struggle for dictatorship in the economic sphere itself; then the fierce battle to acquire control of the State, so that its resources and authority may be abused in the economic struggles; finally, the clash between States themselves."

Finally Pius XI completes the picture: "You assuredly know, venerable brethren and beloved children, and you

lament the ultimate consequences of this individualistic spirit in economic affairs. Free competition is dead; economic dictatorship has taken its place. Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain; the whole economic life has become hard, cruel, and relentless in a ghastly measure. The State which should be the supreme arbiter, ruling in kingly fashion far above all party contention, intent only upon justice and the common good, has become instead a slave, bound over to the service of human passion and greed."

From this picture drawn by two Popes, it appears that there has already been a vicious regimentation of the rank and file of citizens by the forces of greed, exploitation and economic domination. This regimentation is founded on a denial of liberty, economic liberty for the masses, and unrestrained liberty or license for the privileged few. It is against this regimentation by wealth, itself unregimented and unregulated, that we see a twofold reaction in the United States, one of Socialists and Communists, and the other of those who demand that government use its power to regiment wealth, the interests and economic domination, in favor of the common good of all; namely, peace and prosperity. It is for this reason that Pius XI says: "Free competition and still more economic domination must be kept within just and definite limits, and must be brought under the effective control of public authority, in matters appertaining to the latter's competence. The public institutions must be such as to make the whole of human society conform to the common good; *i. e.*, to the standard of social justice."

But organized wealth does not like *must* legislation. Organized wealth having regimented everything else, refuses to be regimented itself. Organized wealth having reduced the masses to organized slavery, begins to shout liberty when its own license is attacked, begins to call upon the stars and stripes as an American cloak for the black flag of economic domination.

Well, if Liberty Leaguers and others do not want regimentation, if they are sincere in their cry for liberty, there is a way out. Let them give that liberty to others which they claim for themselves. Let them promote the liberty and rights of the proletariat. Let them seek for the masses their right to a living wage, let them advocate the right of the

masses to bargain collectively with capital by agents of their own choosing. Let them seek a treatment for the worker such as the workers have a right to and their human dignity demands. Let them urge the principle that human rights are greater than property rights, and men more important than cattle or machines. Let them cry out from the house-tops that the first care on industry and finance are the men who are the indispensable element of the profits of industry and finance. Let them proclaim the principle of Pius XI: "Every effort must be made that at least in the future a just share only of the fruits of production be permitted to accumulate in the hands of the wealthy, and that an ample sufficiency be supplied to workingmen. . . . For every sincere observer is conscious that the vast differences between the few who hold excessive wealth and the many who live in destitution constitute a grave evil in modern society."

Liberty Leaguers and others, if you love liberty, love liberty for all, promote liberty for all, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If you do not wish to be regimented, regiment yourselves. Then you will need have no fear of regimentation by government. Liberty Leaguers and others, the red flag of Communism is not an immediate danger in this country. Red is only a sign of danger; red means only to stop, look and listen. The real danger lies in the economic liberalism you sponsor. Your system and your principles are the cancerous growth eating at the vitals of our American social organism. It is too bad that you, unconsciously perhaps, led astray, do not attack causes rather than symptoms. Communism is only a symptom; economic liberalism is a cause.

I yield to no man in my loyalty to the American Constitution and the American flag. There is only one flag which should stretch its protecting folds over our national capitol. It is neither the red flag of Communism nor the black flag of perverted individualism. It is the stars and stripes. That flag represents charity to all and malice to none. That flag represents not class warfare, but the co-operation of all classes, the rich as well as the poor for the common good of peace and prosperity. When the American flag ceases to represent that, then the American Constitution will be dead, American liberty and democracy will be dead, even though the flag still waves and the American Con-

stitution is still glorified. This nation cannot remain nine and nine-tenth slave and one-tenth of one per cent free! In America the economic freedom of the masses must go hand and hand with their political freedom. Otherwise there will be Communism or Fascism, a perverted absolute State. But it's going to be neither. It's going to be economic and political freedom represented by the stars and stripes, and safeguarded by a Constitution, changed if necessary, but still the American Constitution. Social Justice is on the way and that is only another name for true Americanism, freedom and democracy. This may be bad news for a few; it happens to be a fact!

The American Liberty League and Our Immoral Economic Order

IGNATIUS W. COX, S.J.

*An address delivered over the Paulist Radio Station WLWL,
New York, February 7, 1936.*

THE question has been raised in some quarters as the result of these broadcasts, whether I am out strong for the New Deal. Now a deal has reference to cards, and card-playing. There are two types of deals in human card-play; one not governed by chance, when the pack is stacked; the other governed by the laws of so-called chance. The evils affecting our body economic, financial and social, and our body politic are to be remedied neither by human deals from stacked packs, nor by chance deals from honest packs. I am strong for no deal in any human or political sense. The only deal I am interested in is God's deal, manifested in the principles of justice and charity as developed by rational ethics, by Christian tradition and Christian theology, and proposed to long-suffering humanity in the social teachings of the vicars of Christ on earth, especially of Leo XIII and Pius XI, and of the successors of the Apostles, the Catholic Hierarchy throughout the world.

As a point of departure for this evening's broadcast on "The American Liberty League and Our Immoral Economic

Order," let me quote from Pius XI a short passage on ownership of property. "First, let it be made clear beyond all doubt that neither Leo XIII nor those theologians, who have taught under the guidance and direction of the Church, have ever denied or called in question the twofold aspect of ownership, which is individual or social according as it regards individuals or concerns the common good. Their unanimous contention has always been that the right to own private property has been given to man by nature, or rather by the Creator Himself, not only that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those of their families, but also that by means of it, the goods which the Creator has destined for the human race may truly serve this purpose. . . . There is therefore a double danger to be avoided. On the one hand, if the social and public aspect of ownership be denied or minimized, the logical consequence is Individualism, as it is called; on the other hand, the rejection or diminution of its private and individual character necessarily leads to some form of Collectivism. To disregard these dangers would be to rush headlong into the quicksands of modernism in the moral, juridical, and the social order, which we condemned in the Encyclical Letter issued at the beginning of our Pontificate."

Now the application of this passage to the American Liberty League is this. The Liberty League is fostering, promoting and directing a powerful movement in defense of the American Constitution and against any attempts to bring into our fair land a collectivistic, socialistic or communistic order. So far, so good. But here is the question I have turned over and battled with in my mind for the last six months. In reacting so strongly against the danger of collectivism, has the American Liberty League fallen into the lap of the opposite danger, branded by Pius XI as Individualism? Is the Liberty League in its fear of Collectivism "rushing headlong into the quicksands of that modernism in the moral, juridical and social order," which was condemned by Pius XI in the beginning of his Pontificate? That Catholics have a need of and a right to the answers to these questions is altogether obvious, if the priesthood and laity are to follow the call of Pius XI: "The world has nowadays sore need of valiant soldiers of Christ, who strain every nerve and sinew to preserve the human family from the dire

havoc which would befall it, were the teachings of the Gospel to be flouted, and a social order permitted to prevail, which spurns no less the laws of nature than those of God."

Let me remind my audience, what I have said before. In preparing these broadcasts, I keep steadfastly before my mind truth, justice and charity. I have no desire nor intent in fighting the battle of justice and charity for the poor, to be wanting in either justice or charity for the rich. In preparation of this discourse, I had before me thirty-two pamphlets issued by the American Liberty League, courteously supplied by the League in answer to letter and telegram. Most of these pamphlets, and the most important, I read completely.

From Pamphlet No. 38, June, 1935, entitled, "Facts About the American Liberty League," I learn that by its charter the society shall first "defend and uphold the Constitution of the United States," and secondly, "will teach the necessity of respect for the rights of persons and property as fundamental to every successful form of government and also will teach the duty of government to encourage and protect individual and group initiative and enterprise, to foster the right to work, earn, save and acquire property, and to preserve ownership and lawful use of property when acquired." In another pamphlet, No. 96, entitled "Seventeen Months of the American Liberty League," we learn that the society has carried out its first objective by attacking the constitutionality or the Americanism of most of the features of the New Deal. In a number of other pamphlets, it has gone into the matter in detail and heaped up an accumulation of facts and accusations which I say in all sincerity are alarming and demand careful consideration by every liberty-loving American and a detailed and specific answer by those who are arraigned. We must and we will have government by law, not by men; government by the whim of man is dictatorship, is tyranny. Government by law is government by reason. In this connection I advise my listeners to read the editorial comment in *The Catholic World* for February, 1936, on the matter in question. If the facts bear the interpretations and the accusations based upon them by the Liberty League, then there can be no doubt that the Liberty League, in rejecting the diminution of the individual aspects of ownership, is reacting against the Collectivism

denounced by Pius XI. I wish to say emphatically here that nothing said later in this broadcast should be interpreted as a disparagement of any attempt to safeguard our Constitution. If we lose the Constitution, we lose almost everything.

The second part of the program of the American Liberty League with regard to personal liberty and enterprise and initiative is not so clear. Does the League mean by those words an approval of that perverted and uncontrolled individualism, condemned by Leo XIII and Pius XI, the logical result of which is economic domination? Why all this insistence on individual effort and initiative at a moment when millions are out of work and unable to exercise any effort or initiative?

Why did the author of Pamphlet 16, "The Constitution Still Stands," write these words: "The chief end of popular government is the promotion of the interests of individuals." The veriest novice in the philosophy of the State knows that the end and purpose of the State is the common good of peace and prosperity. This end and purpose of the State is written in the Preamble to our own Constitution: "We the people of the United States in order to promote the general welfare . . ." The general welfare, temporal felicity, is the end of the State as taught in every Catholic political theory from the days of St. Thomas to Suarez and Bellarmine, and is the universal teaching of Catholic philosophy today.

Why did the author of Pamphlet 90, entitled, "The American Constitution, Whose Heritage?" write in a condemning way, that in the N. R. A. "Collective bargaining was enshrined?" Every Catholic social student knows that collective bargaining is a right of the laborer of which he has been too often deprived by perverted economic individualists. And listen to this by the same writer. Speaking of the rich, he says: "They accumulated that money under the rules of the game which existed at the time of the accumulation" What were frequently those rules in the past, I shall speak of in a future broadcast.

In the booklet, No. 38, entitled, "Facts About the American Liberty League," we read, quoted from a Yale professor, that the League is calling attention to the current changes which spell the breakdown of our traditional institutions and

our economic philosophy. Our economic philosophy—that is what I am after—what is our economic philosophy as approved by the American Liberty League? Is it perverted, unregulated individualism? Does all this insistence on initiative and self-reliance of the individual mean that individualism condemned by Leo XIII and Pius XI?

Our economic philosophy, what is it, Liberty Leaguers, in your own authorized pamphlets? Ah! here it is in Pamphlet 43, entitled, "The Duty of the Church to the Social Order": "Starting approximately 150 years ago, possessed of almost a virgin country rich in natural resources, with a heterogeneous population of about three and a half million people, the American people have achieved these marvelous results, largely because they adopted as their guiding economic principle, the so-called capitalistic system, the enterprise system, the system of individual initiative or the system of *laissez faire*, as you may choose to call it, for they are the same. In 1776, when Adam Smith . . . described the motives which guide men's actions in the fields of economics he was but translating into that field the same principles of human freedom as were enunciated by Martin Luther in the Reformation."

So this is our economic philosophy, perverted and unregulated individualism, immoral economic liberalism. And the writer of this pamphlet says: "In my judgment it has produced more of the good things of life . . . has secured a wider distribution of these things than any other society man has yet seen."

But there is no need for us to learn from the American Liberty League the economic philosophy which has dominated America for the last hundred and more years. It started with perverted individualism or economic liberalism and has logically ended up with economic domination by private interests which in general have always resisted reform. The formation of the United States Steel Corporation by the Morgan interests in 1901—a billion dollar corporation—may be marked as the beginning of our great Business Era. By that act, writes Frederick Lewis Allen in the "Lords of Creation": "Hundreds of steel companies—the Tin Plate Group alone was a combination of 265 plants—were being brought under a single control; the fate of 168,000 steel workers, the production of half the steel used in the United

States, now hung on the decision of one man." Again he writes: "The relationship between the management and the workmen was destined to remain feudal. Whenever a steel corporation official thereafter found himself on the witness stand and the embarrassing matter of the twelve-hour day or the seven-day week was brought up, he always expressed acute distress at the fact that the corporation had not yet succeeded in doing away with this barbarous condition and said that it was about to do so—but the years dragged on and the twelve-hour day and the seven-day week remained, to the disgrace of American industry." The twelve-hour day was not changed until the Harding administration.

Then came the big fight between the Harriman railroad interests and the Morgan railroad interests with Northern Pacific rising to \$1000 a share, while the rest of the market crashed, and thousands of families, their money tied up in margin, lost everything. I was working in a Wall Street broker's office at the time. This was the era of ruthless competition, that era which is summed up by Leo XIII in the words: "A small number of very rich men have been able to lay on the masses of the poor, a yoke little better than slavery itself."

Then in our country came attempts at reform by Theodore Roosevelt and again by Woodrow Wilson. But that is another story for another broadcast. After that came the days of Coolidge prosperity, but that did not mean that the standard of living of the industrial wage earner was a matter for boasting. In 1929 according to the Brookings Institute—in that era, 78 per cent of the American population lived on family incomes of less than \$3,000 or individual incomes of less than \$1,500, and more than half of this 78 per cent lived on family incomes of less than \$1,500, or individual incomes of \$750 a year. And that in the era of Coolidge prosperity.

In the meantime, and up to this moment, economic concentration or domination has been going on apace. I have in my room a chart published in 1932 which shows that practically the whole industrial life of the United States was then in the hands of a small group of finance capitalists, through the mechanism of interlocking directorates. It shows how eight New York banks at that time had enmeshed in their web all the chief industries of the United States. This, I

think, is an example of that economic and financial domination of which Pius XI speaks: "This power becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by those who, because they hold and control money, are able also to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the lifeblood to the entire economic body, and grasping, as it were, in their hands the very soul of production so that no one dare breathe against their will. This accumulation of power, the characteristic note of the modern economic order, is a natural result of limitless free competition, which permits the survival of those only who are the strongest, which often means those who fight most relentlessly, who pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."

In the meantime while wealth accumulates men decay. Millions are still out of work. Thousands of young men are coming out of college with no hope for the future and despair in their hearts. Millions are at this moment in that position described by Pius XI: "The conditions of social and economic life are such that vast multitudes can only with great difficulty pay attention to that one thing necessary; namely, their eternal salvation." And all this in land blessed with fertility by the hand of a bountiful Creator, mechanized to the extent that it can provide for all. All this in a land where business and finance has had a fair chance, and a large measure of freedom from interference by government. If unregulated individualism ever had a chance to make good, it is here in America and the evidence of its failure lies in ghastly monuments all around—economic, social, above all, spiritual failures, written in the ruin of souls. That is what I mean by our immoral economic order, the product of 150 years of individualism ending in economic domination with wealth concentrated in the hands of a few and the masses reduced to economic slavery.

What thousands who have been asked to join the American Liberty League, doubtless, want to know is, has the American Liberty League in reacting against the dangers of collectivism, fallen into the opposite dangers of that perverted and unregulated individualism, branded by Pius XI? It would seem that it has. It would seem that all this talk about initiative and self-reliance and the rights of private property, falsely identified with human rights, is a clarion call for a defense of *laissez faire* or economic liberalism. Is

this the position of the American Liberty League or not? Only the promoters of the American Liberty League can answer that question! We have a right to the answer. I do not condemn yet. Perhaps there is some explanation, some defense of the American Liberty League against the charge that they are champions of *laissez faire*, of perverted individualism, of economic liberalism. But if there is no defense, no explanation, if the American Liberty League is a champion and a defender of this pernicious doctrine, then, this fact is certain—no Catholic who knows Catholic social doctrine can approve this phase of the American Liberty League. All Catholic ethics, all Catholic moral doctrine, all Catholic tradition, the utterances of Popes and bishops, the voices of Leo XIII and Pius XI are raised trumpet-tongued in damnation of this indefensible doctrine. And coming nearer home, the bishops of the Administrative Council of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in a statement issued on "The Present Crisis," and dated April, 1933, have already condemned such a stand: "The social philosophy prevailing during recent centuries has carried human society far from its safe moorings. That philosophy—if indeed, it be worthy of the name—which has ruled governments, groups, and individuals for the past three hundred years has not taken as its guide the moral law, has not considered the rights of man. Money, not man, has been the supreme consideration and the justifying end. That philosophy has aroused opposition and has given rise to errors and exaggerations that are anti-Catholic and anti-Christian.

"That same demoralizing philosophy defended, and defends today, unrestrained individual economic freedom and the economic dictatorship that has succeeded it. That philosophy permits individuals, corporations, and nations to accumulate as much wealth as they can, according to the unfair methods of modern business, and to use such accumulated wealth as they see fit. It honors and proclaims as sovereign rulers of economic empires men who succeeded in amassing unjustly these fabulous fortunes.

"That philosophy has broken down or forbidden the establishment of protective organizations. It has broken down or forbidden an organized economic life to administer the production of wealth and its distribution in accordance with social justice and the interdependence of economic relations.

It has denied government its right to guard justice and the common good. It has given greed a free hand.

"That philosophy denied and denies, in reality, the oneness and the solidarity of mankind. In its light, wealth, business and the power that material prosperity gives, are in themselves supreme ends. Human rights must be sacrificed to those ends, and humanity itself must become the mere instrument in the production of wealth, not the master controlling it. Such a philosophy has always been and will ever be false and un-Christian in principle and application. It has literally taken God out of the world."

Is the American Liberty League committed or not to the cause of perverted individualism of economic liberalism? Thousands are being asked to join the Liberty League for the promotion of its purposes. Thousands of these are perhaps Catholics. Every God-fearing man or woman, every Christian, and certainly every Catholic who understands the social teaching of his Church has a right to the answer to that question. Liberty Leaguers, what *is* your answer?

Church Unity

*Editorial comment taken from the Month (London)
for February, 1936.*

IT seems to us that, just because some of our separated brethren seem to share our desire to have them with us in the one Fold we should be careful lest in our zeal for their conversion we should in any way obscure or minimize the essential characteristics of that Fold, especially its Unique-ness and its Visibility. An article in the *Revue Apologétique* for December, devoted to explaining "the psychology of the Octave of Prayers" and written for publication in Anglican and Orthodox periodicals as well, seems to us, earnest and eloquent though it be, somewhat open to this reproach. It elevates this particular devotion into the position of the chief means of restoring the unity of Christendom, forgetful of the fact that it is confined to a mere fraction of the year and that comparatively few non-Catholics share in it or have even heard of it. The writer would lay the blame for the disruption of Christendom equally on Catholics and on the sects and schisms, yet, though indeed the sight of past and present scandals in the Church should fill us with shame and compunction, we cannot admit that the note of holiness which is hers has ever thereby become so obscured as to justify those who left her. It is possible to exaggerate the need of the reform in head and members which Trent set about so energetically.

Moreover, the author argues as if the accession of those without would enormously enrich the Church by means of "cultures" at present strange to her. This is to fall into the error of regarding the Church as being almost exclusively Latin, whereas she already embraces all the nations of the earth with their various mentalities—Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Greek and the rest—whilst her different rites and local customs show that uniformity was never her ideal. No doubt the accession of the teeming millions of Asia would add certain varieties of liturgy, church architecture and the like, to her external aspect in that continent, but she has been Pentecostal in outlook and constitution since the beginning.

The least commendable, however, of the conclusions of this article is that it seems to decry individual conversions to the Church. We are confronted by the old delusion of

Corporate Reunion. The author frankly confesses that this could not be accomplished without a miracle, and he boldly says we should ask for it, stigmatizing as mistaken the only aim which we consider Catholic and practical—the freeing of individual souls from the mists of error. He would have Catholics pray for what they have already got! A union consummated by the conversion of individuals to our one Confession, he describes as a vain hope. Every such conversion produces, by a psychological law, a reaction amongst those who remain, and the Church loses as much as she gains.

It is the author's psychology which, we submit, is illusory. Leaving out the schismatics as possessing some fixity of doctrine and some semblance of authority, how does he imagine that the Protestant world, which has no principle of doctrinal cohesion, which simply believes as it chooses and changes belief when it thinks good, could come to the truth *en masse* and be received into the Fold in more or less uniform groups? No two Protestants except by accident believe alike, for they have no means of knowing for certain what is revealed truth. The miracle which the Holy Spirit would have to work, in order to fit those outside the visible Fold for entrance into it in large groups, would be a simultaneous illumination of the mind and movement of the will, convincing each and all, as St. Paul was convinced, of their obligation to accept the faith and jurisdiction of the Catholic and Roman Church. No doubt, God could do it, and sufficiently earnest and widespread prayer might predispose large numbers of sincere souls for so extraordinary a grace. But we have no right to count upon that possible method of reunion as likely to occur, and on that account to suspend for a single moment the Church's traditional methods of preaching the Gospel. "Preach the word," cried St. Paul, that great hunter of souls, "be urgent in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and instruction": so eager was he "to bring every mind into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Such has ever been the attitude of the Church towards the individual soul: she welcomes all who approach her, singly or in groups, but her first message is to the individual for whom Christ died. Were the author's advice to be followed we should find sincere heretics and schismatics justifying themselves in their isolation because, in spite of their

prayers, God has not yet shown them *as a body* where truth lies and how union is to be accomplished, whilst Catholics are to be dissuaded from telling them, lest they should be affronted and deterred from further search. If God's will is loved and truly sought, there should be no grounds for such fear. Why should a traveler, seated in the wrong train, be anything but grateful for being told his mistake? The Church is God's means to bring man to Himself. Why should men be aggrieved at learning where it is and how to enter it? Why should they not be more than willing to exchange what proves to be a counterfeit for the genuine Pearl of Great Price?

THOUGHT
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MARCH, 1936

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Peace Action of Pope Benedict XV
FRANCIS S. BETTEN, S.J.

Chaucer's Lost Language
SISTER M. MADELEVA, PH.D.

The Quantum Theory of Matter
KARL F. HERZFELD, PH.D.

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